THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI BALRAM SINGH YADAV) : (a) Few instances of illegal excavation and smuggling of precious and semi-precious stones in the districts of Kalahandi and Bolangir of Orissa have come to notice of the State Government of Orissa during the last three years. Report of illegal mining of moon stone (cat's eye) has been received from Koderma area of Bihar by the State Government of Bihar.

(b) There is no restrictions on inter-state movement of precious stones.

(c) No, Sir.

Closure of Mica Mines in Bihar

193. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) what was the total number of mica mines in Bihar a decade ago ;

(b) whether it is a fact that a large number of MICA mines in Bihar and adjoining States have been lying closed since long ;

(c) the number of mica mines operational at present in Bihar ;

(d) whether Government have enquired into the reasons for their closure as well as the steps needed for their revival ; and

(e) if so, the details of measures both short-term and long-term being contemplated, if any, by Govenment for reviving the mica mines in Bihar and other areas ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI BALRAM SINGH YADAV) : (a) During 1982, there were 136 working mica mines in Bihar.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) At present, the number of working mica mines in Bihar is 50.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) The main reasons identified for closure of mica mines are : lack of demand in the international market, substitution of mica and its product, and the deeper mines becoming operationally viable.

Revival of this industry can be through production of value-added items like mica paper and mica based insulated materials, identification of new export markets for Indian mica and its products, technological improvement and diversification of mica and mica products.

"इस्को" का निजीकरण

194. **श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह** : क्या इस्पात मंत्री 6 अगस्त, 1993 को राज्य सभा में तारांकित प्रश्न 174 के दिए गए उत्तर को देखेंगे और यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) सरकार द्वारा "इस्को" बर्नपुर के निजीकरण के मामले में अब तक आगे क्या कार्यवाही की गयी है, और

(ख) क्या कुछ व्यक्तियों/संगठनों द्वारा "इस्को" के निजीकरण के विरोध का प्रयास किया जा रहा है, और यदि हां, तो उसका ब्यौरा क्या है ?

इस्पात मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (संतोष मोहन देव) : (क) यह मामला अभी सरकार के विचाराधीन है ।

(ख) विभिन्न केन्द्रीय श्रमिक संगठनों ने "इस्को" में निजी भागीदारी का विरोध किया है । अगस्त, 1993 में पश्चिम बंगाल राज्य विधानसभा का एक सर्वदलीय शिष्ट-मंडल इस्पात मंत्री से मिला और उसने मांग की कि "इस्को" का आधुनिकीकरण स्टील अथॉरिटी ऑफ इंडिया लिमिटेड (सेल) द्वारा निजी भागीदारी के बिना किया जाए ।

Closure of Mini Steel Plant

195. SHRI P. UPENDRA : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether a large number of mini steel plants have recently been closed down due